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Plot to kill Munawar foiled, 2 arrested

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 3 OCTOBER 2025 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 10 RABI`II, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 269 | Pages: 8

No 'us vs them': Bhagwat bats for Hindu unity as RSS turns 100

NAGPUR, 2 OCT

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat, addressing the annual Vijayadashmi rally in Nagpur, emphasised the strength and unity of Hindu society, asserting that the concept of "us and them" never existed in India. The rally also marked the centenary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded on Dussehra in 1925 by KB Hedgewar.

Bhagwat highlighted the enduring cultural unity of the Hindu society despite invasions, stating, "A divided house cannot stand. Our inherent cultural unity is our strength."

He said that diversity is India's tradition and that we must embrace our differences. "Some differences may lead to discord. Differences must be expressed within the law.

Provoking communities is unacceptable. The administration must act fairly, but the youth must also stay alert and intervene if needed. The grammar of anarchy needs to be stopped," he said. He also said global interdependence shouldn't become a compulsion and there is no substitute for `swavalamban' (self-reliance).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, commemorating the RSS's 100-year journey, released a Rs 100 coin and postage stamp in Delhi. The coin features the national emblem and an image of Bharat Mata with bowing RSS workers. However, critics slammed the move, calling it an endorsement of a "divisive ideology" and an insult to India's freedom struggle. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: RTI

Shops open in Leh as curfew relaxes after 1 week

LEH, 2 OCT

Life is slowly returning to normal in Leh as the local administration relaxed the curfew on Thursday. Streets were bustling with vehicles and pedestrians after shops reopened under the new timetable, offering relief to residents confined to their homes for a week. Markets are allowed to operate from 10am to 5pm. The unrest was triggered by protests demanding Statehood for Ladakh and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule, which protects tribal populations. The demonstrations turned violent on 24 September, leading to clashes with police and the deaths of four people after protesters allegedly set a political party office on fire. *—ANI*

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India and China to resume flights after 5-year gap

Move signals thaw in ties following years of border tension

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

India and China will resume direct flight services by the end of October, marking a significant step towards normalising bilateral ties strained by the prolonged border standoff in eastern Ladakh.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced the move, which follows a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin. IndiGo is set to restart direct flights between Kolkata and Guangzhou from 26 October.

Flight services between the two countries were suspended in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The disruption continued amid escalating tensions following the Galwan Valley clashes, which saw India-China relations reach their lowest point since the 1962 war. The border face-off lasted over four years and was resolved in October 2024, after both sides agreed to disengage at the final friction points—Depsang and Demchok.

Since early this year, civil aviation authorities from both nations have held technical-level talks to revise the air services agreement and facilitate the resumption of direct connectivity. The MEA confirmed that flights will resume between designated points, subject to commercial decisions by the carriers and operational readiness.

"This agreement will facilitate people-to-people contact and support the gradual normalisation of bilateral exchanges," the MEA stated.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation also emphasised that the move follows sustained engagement and will enhance air connectivity, boost economic cooperation, and foster cultural exchanges.

The resumption of direct flights is among several recent steps to improve ties, including the reopening of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. Modi and President Xi also met again in Kazan, Russia, during the BRICS summit, taking further decisions to stabilise the relationship. *—PTI*

- IndiGo is set to restart direct flights between Kolkata and Guangzhou from 26 October. Flight services between the two countries were suspended in 2020 due to Covid pandemic.

Rajnath Singh checks out guns after performing 'Shastra pooja' at Bhuj Military Station at Bhuj, in Gujarat on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Rajnath warns Pak over Sir Creek

NEW DELHI/BHUJ, 2 OCT

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has issued a stern warning to Pakistan, stating that any military "misadventure" in the disputed Sir Creek sector will be met with a "decisive response" capable of changing "both history and geography."

Speaking at a military base near Bhuj, Gujarat, where he celebrated Dussehra and performed the traditional shastra puja (worship of weapons), Singh referenced Pakistan's recent expansion of military infrastructure in the strategic tidal estuary. He recalled the Indian Army's advance towards Lahore in 1965, asserting that "the road to Karachi also passes through the creek." Singh also highlighted the success of Operation Sindoor, noting that the Indian military had achieved all objectives while countering terrorism without escalating into a wider conflict. He stated that the operation had exposed weaknesses in Pakistan's air defence and demonstrated India's capacity to strike decisively when required. *—PTI*

WHAT IS SIR CREEK?

Sir Creek is a 96-km-long tidal estuary between Gujarat's Rann of Kutch and Pakistan. It is considered a disputed region due to varying interpretations of maritime boundary lines.

10 killed as tractor with Durga idols falls in MP lake

INDORE/KHANDWA, 2 OCT

At least 10 devotees, three of them minors, died after a tractor-trolley carrying idols of Goddess Durga for immersion on Vijayadashmi plunged into a lake in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, police said.

Three injured people were rescued and admitted to hospital, a district health official said, adding nearly 30 devotees were on board the ill-fated tractor-trolley.

The tragedy took place in the Pandhana area when devotees were riding on the tractor which was carrying Goddess Durga idols from various villages for immersion, Inspector General of Police (Indore rural range) Anurag told PTI.

So far, 10 bodies, three of them of minors, have retrieved with the help of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel and local divers, he said, adding a search and rescue operation was going on at the site.

An additional SDRF team has been sent to the spot, the IPS officer informed.

"We have learnt that five to six devotees have survived," the IG said, adding a probe was launched into the accident.

Chief Minister Mohan will pay a compensation of Rs 4 lakh each to the families of the deceased.

Eyewitnesses said panic ensued immediately after the vehicle fell into the lake with people frantically searching for their relatives. A large crowd of villagers gathered at the site and assisted in the rescue operation. *—PTI*

A DAY TO CELEBRATE

Students shower flowers on Mahatma Gandhi's statue to mark his 156th birth anniversary at MG Road, Bengaluru, while Mysuru comes alive with the grand 'Jamboo Savari'. Elephant Abhimanyu steals the show, carrying Goddess Chamundeshwari in a dazzling 750kg golden howdah as thousands witness Vijayadashami's spectacular finale **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD/ SALAR**

CONG ISSUES NOTICES TO 2 K'TAKA LEADERS

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Congress on Thursday issued show cause notices to two of its leaders, Kunigal MLA HD Ranganath and former MP LR Shivarame Gowda, for publicly commenting on a potential leadership change in Karnataka, despite a directive from the AICC against such statements.

Congress Disciplinary Committee President in Karnataka K Rahman Khan issued separate notices, stating that the leaders' remarks to the media regarding a change in the Chief Minister's post were in violation of party discipline and likely to cause confusion and embarrassment. Both leaders have been asked to submit their explanations. The controversy erupted after Ranganath and Gowda claimed on Wednesday that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar would take over as Chief Minister in November. *—Salar News*

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Israel stops Sumud Flotilla, detains activists

JERUSALEM, 2 OCT

Israeli naval forces intercepted the Global Sumud Flotilla on Thursday, detaining dozens of activists, including European lawmakers, attempting to break the blockade on Gaza.

The flotilla, the largest yet, comprised over 40 boats and nearly 450 activists. It was carrying a symbolic amount of humanitarian aid, aiming to draw global attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza amid growing criticism of Israel's ongoing offensive, which has devastated large areas and killed tens of thousands.

Despite hopes that the size of the flotilla would complicate interception efforts, Israeli forces halted the operation by Thursday afternoon.

Among those detained were climate activist Greta Thunberg, former Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau, and European Parliament member Rima Hassan. Israel's Foreign Ministry confirmed the detainees were "safe and in good health" and would be deported.

Organisers reported at least 39 boats were intercepted in a nightlong operation. Israeli authorities said one vessel remained at sea and would be stopped if it approached. *—PTI*

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A screengrab shows activist Greta Thunberg sitting next to a person wearing tactical gear, as vessels of the Global Sumud Flotilla were intercepted by Israeli security on the way to Gaza **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Zubeen's manager, organiser charged with murder

GUWAHATI, 2 OCT

Assam police have added a murder charge against Zubeen Garg's manager Siddhartha Sharma and festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta in connection with the singer's death in Singapore, a senior officer said on Thursday.

The two were arrested from Delhi on Wednesday and remanded to 14-day police custody in Guwahati.

Mahanta is the younger brother of former DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, currently Chief Information Commissioner of Assam, while his elder brother, Nani Gopal Mahanta, was former education advisor to CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and is now Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University. *—PTI*

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END OF AN ERA

Jane Goodall, champion of chimps, dies at 91

NEW YORK, 2 OCT

Jane Goodall, the pioneering primatologist and environmentalist, has died at the age of 91, the Jane Goodall Institute confirmed on Wednesday.

Goodall transformed the field of primatology in the 1960s by documenting tool use, complex emotions, and social behaviour among chimpanzees in Tanzania. Her groundbreaking observations redefined human understanding of animals and earned her global acclaim.

Born in London in 1934, her passion for wildlife began in childhood. Encouraged by anthropologist Louis Leakey, she began her chimpanzee research in 1960, later earning a PhD from Cambridge despite having no formal undergraduate degree.

Goodall founded the Jane Goodall Institute and became a tireless advocate for conservation, travelling worldwide to promote environmental awareness and humanitarian causes. She received numerous honours, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2025), the Templeton Prize (2021), and was a UN Messenger of Peace. *—PTI*

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Chhannulal Mishra, classical maestro, no more

MIRZAPUR, 2 OCT

Padma Vibhushan awardee and Hindustani classical maestro Pandit Chhannulal Mishra passed away early Thursday at the age of 89 after a prolonged illness.

His daughter Namrata Mishra said he died around 4 am while under treatment after his health deteriorated late Wednesday. He had been hospitalised for over two weeks with age-related complications.

Born in Azamgarh in 1936, Mishra was trained by his father Badri Prasad Mishra, Ustad Abdul Ghani Khan of the Kirana gharana, and Thakur Jaidev Singh. A leading exponent of the Banaras gharana and the Purab Ang tradition of Thumri, he was renowned for Khayal, Thumri, Dadra, Chaiti, Kajri, and Bhajan.

He received the Padma Bhushan in 2010 and Padma Vibhushan in 2020.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute, recalling Mishra's artistic legacy and role as one of his proposers for the Varanasi Lok Sabha seat in 2014. His last rites will be held at 5 pm in Varanasi. *—PTI*

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People perform Huli Vesha or tiger dance as part of the grand Mysuru Dasara procession; Bengali women dance during the immersion of Durga idol at Ulsoor Lake (right), on Thursday

PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD/X

DASARA ENDS ON A GRAND NOTE

Mysuru lights up with massive processions as lakhs of people gather to see kumki elephants

MYSURU, 2 OCT

Curtains came down on the 11-day-long world-renowned Mysuru Dasara celebrations in the palace city on Thursday, with a spectacular procession on the occasion of Vijayadashami, marking the grand finale.

Celebrated as 'Nada Habba' (State festival), the Dasara or 'Sharan Navaratri' festivities was a grand affair this year, showcasing Karnataka's rich culture and traditions, reminiscent of royal pomp and glory.

The grand procession, attended by thousands, began with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah along with a host of ministers and dignitaries offering pooja to the 'Nandi Dhwaja' (Nandi Flag) between 1pm and 1.18pm during the auspicious "Dhanur Lagna" at the Balarama gate of the imposing Amba Vilas Palace.

"If people are happy and participate in large numbers, we are happy...Mysuru Dasara has attracted more tourists this year," Siddaramaiah said at the event. Noting that this was the eight Dasara he was attending as Chief Minister, he asserted that he would preside over next year's as well.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Musuru royal family scion Yaduveer Wadiyar, and others during the 'Jamboo Savari' as part of Dasara celebrations, in Mysuru on Thursday ***PHOTO: SALAR***

After offering pooja, Siddaramaiah greeted the people on the occasion of Vijayadashami.

The procession covered a distance of about 5kms before culminating at Bannimantapa.

The Chief Minister and other dignitaries, including Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, the erstwhile Mysuru royal family scion Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar flagged off the 'Jamboo Savari' by showering flowers on the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, placed in a howdah, during auspicious "Kumbha Lagna" between 4.42 pm and 5.06 pm.

Lakhs of people were in attendance.

Twenty-one shots were fired from the cannons, as elephant Abhimanyu, which is carrying the goddess in howdah for the sixth time, flanked by 'Kumki' elephants -- Cauvery and Roopa -- arrived at the specially erected dais, from where the dignitaries offered flowers to the goddess.

Various programmes were held for last ten auspicious days of Navrathri, during which the palace, major streets, turnarounds or circles and buildings of Mysuru were illuminated with lights, fondly known as "Deepalankaara".

The festivities included events like food melas, flower show, cultural programmes, farmers' Dasara, women's Dasara, Yuva Dasara, and children's Dasara, , along with the airshow, drone show and Mysuru Dasara exhibition.

58 tableaux provide glimpse of State's heritage in Mysuru

MYSURU, 2 OCT

Fifty-eight tableaux from 31 districts of the State and various important government departments including union government institutions held a mirror to Karnataka's rich history, arts and crafts and architecture while folk artists from 151 troupes presented dances showcasing the state's arts and culture.

They performed for thousands of people at the Balarama Gate of Mysuru Palace, which had a seating 48,000 people.

Highlights included Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation's tableau on the Shakti scheme, HAL's achievements, BEML's role in defence, and Indian Railways' works on Chenab and Pamban bridges.

Districts showcased local heritage: Mandya recalled the Shivapura Flag Hoisting, Chikkaballapur its scientists,

Dharwad its national flag units, and Udupi its cleanliness drive.

Kalaburagi highlighted Sharana Basaveshwara and Bahamani legacy, Kodagu promoted trekking routes, Mysuru displayed the Badanavalu Khadi Gramodyog Centre, and Bengaluru City presented "Brand Bengaluru" initiatives. *—Salar News*

Yaduveer concludes royal Dasara rituals

MYSURU, 2 OCT

Mysuru royal family head Yaduveer Wadiyar concluded the private Dasara rituals with the Vijaya Yatre to the Bhuvaneshwari temple on Thursday noon, where he performed the Shami pooja. Prior to this, traditional wrestlers staged the Vajramushti Kalaga duel, drawing blood as part of the age-old practice. This was followed by a private procession, in which Yaduveer Wadiyar was taken in a silver chariot to the Bhuvaneshwari temple, accompanied by the palace elephants, camels and horses, with an ensemble of musicians playing out traditional tunes. The return procession marked the end of the Dasara as celebrated by the Wadiyars. With this, the Dasara celebrations of the Wadiyars, which they have followed since 1610 AD, came to a close. *—Salar News*

Kharge gets pacemaker, vows to resume work

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

A day after undergoing pacemaker implantation, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday expressed his intention to resume work soon. The 83-year-old leader was admitted to M S Ramaiah Hospital in Bengaluru on Tuesday and underwent the procedure on Wednesday. Doctors have advised him to rest, and he has been reported as stable. Kharge thanked Congress leaders, cadres, and supporters for their wishes on X, saying, "My sincere thanks to the Congress cadres, leaders and supporters for the outpouring of wishes. My deepest gratitude. I intend to start my work schedule soon." His son and minister Priyank Kharge, added that the procedure was minor, and Kharge is expected to resume engagements from 3 Oct. *—Agencies*

DAMAGE CONTROL

Don't speak about CM change: DyCM tells Cong members

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday took strong exception to party members discussing leadership change in the State, saying such statements are "damaging the party".

Congress Kunigal MLA HD Ranganath, who is Shivakumar's relative, and former Mandya MP LR Shivarame Gowda on Wednesday renewed the debate by claiming that Shivakumar will become the next CM. Gowda also said that it will happen in November.

"No one is permitted to speak on power sharing, including Ranganath," Shivakumar told press.

He underlined that the matter is now closed after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's assertion that he would complete his full five-year term and both leaders would abide by the High Command's decision.

"Whatever Siddaramaiah has said is final.... People who are speaking on it are damaging the party. Those speaking on his or my behalf are damaging the party and are indulging in anti-party activity," said the KPCC President.

> **Who said there will be a change (of CMs)? Siddaramaiah himself has said that he will abide by the decision of the Congress High Command. There won't be any ranti (revolution), everything will be Shanti (peace)**
>
> -G Parameshwara, Home Minister

Reiterating the party's disciplined stance, the Deputy CM said, " We are the disciplined soldiers of our party. For us party is important, not the individual. Siddaramaiah has said he is not important but the party. We will obey what the party says. That's what we should do." *—Agencies*

KHANDRE LAMENTS WILDLIFE DEATHS

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Thursday expressed sorrow over the recent death of tigers, peacocks and monkeys in the State.

"The recent deaths of five tigers in Male Mahadeshwara Hills, 20 peacocks in Midigeshi of Madhugiri, and 19 monkeys in Bandipur is a deeply painful event that has increased the responsibility of wildlife conservation," he said at the inauguration of 71st Wildlife Week on the steps of Vidhana Soudha. "Conservation of wildlife is not only the responsibility of the forest department staff but also of every citizen."

He said that State is ranked No.1 in the country in terms of elephant population, with 5,395 elephants. The State also has 563 tigers, placing Karnataka second in India for tiger numbers.

"However, in Male Mahadeshwara Hills, in a single day, one per cent of the tigers died due to poisoning," he rued.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by **Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar**, former cricketer and **State wildlife ambassador Anil Kumble** and others. *—Salar News*

RSS had no connection to freedom struggle: DKS

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday criticised the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), saying the organisation had "no connection" to India's freedom struggle.

Asked about the RSS's centenary celebrations, Shivakumar said, "Let them do whatever they want to do. But they are in no way connected to the freedom struggle."

He dismissed the group's historical relevance and highlighted Mahatma Gandhi's teachings on peace and nonviolence.

"We want to see Gandhi's philosophy and the direction he gave to the country being implemented. We are followers of Gandhi," he said.

He added, "Our thoughts are about the nation, freedom, and Gandhiji's ideology. We remember Ishwar, Allah Tero Naam. Will BJP ever say Allah? Do they follow Gandhiji's message? Our national song itself mentions Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Parsis, Jains together. It says our land is a garden of peace for all communities."

"The foundation of this country is built on such inclusive philosophies, and BJP cannot escape from them. They must live within these principles," he said. *—Salar News*

CM pays tributes to Gandhi, Shastri in Mysuru

MYSURU, 2 OCT

State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday marked Gandhi Jayanti at the historic Gandhi Square in Mysuru, paying floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on their birth anniversaries. He prayed for the strength to follow the paths shown by both leaders.

"We are trying to walk the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi. The country attained freedom under his leadership. His fight and sacrifice secured our independence. Remembering him, I pray for the strength to walk on the path shown by him," Siddaramaiah said. He also described Shastri as the most honest person and prayed to follow his example.

Siddaramaiah attended a multi-religious prayer at Town Hall, where leaders from Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Christianity prayed for peace. Prizes were distributed to winners of essay competitions organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations for school, college, and postgraduate students.

Sixty-two year old Shankarappa from Bettalasur cosplayed as Mahatma Gandhi in front of the Vidhana Soudha to celebrate Gandhi Jayanthi, in Bengaluru on Thursday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

- Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said "We are trying to walk the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi. The country attained freedom under the leadership of Gandhi. His fight and sacrifice got us this freedom. So remembering him, I pray for the strength to walk the path shown by him".

The Chief Minister also visited Suttur Mutt near Chamundi foothills and met the seer, Shivarathri Deshikendra Swami. Former minister Tanveer Sait, District Minister HC Mahadevappa, local MLAs, and Congress leaders were present during the celebrations. *—Salar News*

POACHING ROW

Priyank says Nara 'scavenging' on City IT firms

BENGALURU, 2 OCT

IT Minister Priyank Kharge hit back at his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Nara Lokesh after the latter again invited firms to move to Anantpur from City.

Lokesh reposted a report on X which alleged that start-ups and firms were moving north in Bengaluru owing to the "crumbling Outer Ring Road".

"North sounds good. Slightly more north is Anantapur.. where we are building a world class aerospace and defence ecosystem!" Lokesh wrote.

Priyank did not take the post lightly.

State IT Minister Priyank Kharge; Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh ***PHOTO: PTI***

"It is natural for weaker ecosystems to feed off stronger ones. Nothing wrong with that, but when it turns into desperate scavenging, it shows more weakness than strength," Priyank retorted. "(By the way), what is an organism that lives in or on an organism of another species and benefits by deriving nutrients at the other's expense called?"

Priyank claimed that Bengaluru's GDP was projected to grow at a significant 8.5 per cent until 2035, positioning it as the world's fastest-growing City.

Adding that Bengaluru was "one of the highest migrant absorption Cities in India, he said the government "is and will continue to build infrastructure for the rapid growth we are experiencing."

Bengaluru's property market will rise by 5 per cent in 2025, he vowed.*—Salar News*

Bhagwat calls out 'deep state anti-India plot'

Cites Nepal, B'desh as examples; Bats for `swadeshi' to counter tariffs at RSS Centenary event in Nagpur

NAGPUR, 2 OCT

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday attributed the recent unrest in India's neighbourhood, including Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh, to a disconnect between governments and societies, and the absence of capable, people-oriented administrators. He warned that that "deep state" conspiracies forces aiming to destabilise India are active both within and outside the country.

Speaking at the annual Vijayadashami rally in Nagpur, which also marked the RSS's centenary, Bhagwat said India's deep cultural ties with its neighbours make peace and stability in the region essential. Former President Ram Nath Kovind was the chief guest, with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis in attendance.

Bhagwat paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri on their birth anniversaries, describing them as role models of personal and national character.

On economic matters, Bhagwat strongly advocated swadeshi (indigenous production) and swavalamban (self-reliance), warning that global interdependence should not become a compulsion. He asserted that tariff barriers, such as those imposed by the US, would not hinder India's progress. "We must act on our own terms. There is no substitute for self-reliance," he said.

Referring to the Pahalgam terror attack where 26 Indians were killed, Bhagwat said the nation responded with unity, courage, and resolve. He noted that international reactions to the attack revealed the true nature of other countries' friendship with India.

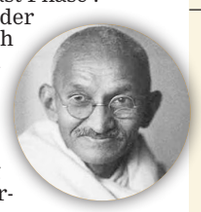
Bhagwat said Naxalites had taken advantage of exploitation, injustice and lack of development in certain pockets, but these obstacles have now been removed. "A comprehensive action plan is required to ensure justice, development, goodwill, empathy, and harmony in these areas," he said.

Bhagwat also highlighted growing public enthusiasm to make India a global leader and stressed that the world is now looking to Indian philosophy for solutions. He urged intellectuals to shape development models rooted in India's unique worldview rather than imitating foreign templates. —*PTI*

Former president Ram Nath Kovind and RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat with others on stage during Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Vijayadashami Utsav 2025 in Nagpur, Maharashtra, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

RSS is communal body: Cong cites Gandhi's remark

On the RSS's 100th anniversary, the Congress cited Mahatma Gandhi's reported remark calling the Sangh a "communal body with a totalitarian outlook," referencing Pyarelal's book 'Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase'. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh also shared a 1948 speech by Sardar Patel, criticising the RSS and defending India's secularism.



Patel had banned the RSS post-Gandhi's assassination, stating its activities created an atmosphere for the tragedy. He later warned against organisations challenging the national flag.

The Congress also slammed PM Modi for releasing a coin and stamp in honour of the RSS, calling it an insult to India's freedom struggle. K C Venugopal questioned honouring an organisation once banned by Patel and accused the RSS of undermining the Constitution and social justice. —*PTI*

An inspiring address by Param Pujya Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat Ji, highlighting the rich contributions of the RSS to nation-building and emphasising the innate potential of our land to attain new heights of glory, thereby benefiting our entire planet

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Guided by the motto of 'Seva Parmo Dharmah', whether facing floods, famines, earthquakes or any other calamity, RSS volunteers organise themselves to serve the needy without expecting anything in return or awaiting instructions

-CP Radhakrishnan, Vice President

India should be rescued from the pitiful state where the one who is in charge of the country's leadership (Prime Minister) releases special postage stamps and commemorative coin on the centenary of the #RSS movement, which gave shape to the dreams of the communal leader who killed our Father of the Nation

-MK Stalin, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

'Change policies to protect Himalayas'

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday called for a review of India's development policies, warning that current models may be worsening climate-related issues in the Himalayas. Speaking at the RSS's annual Vijayadashmi event in Nagpur, he cited rising natural disasters, erratic rainfall, landslides, and glacier loss in recent years. "The Himalayas are a protective wall and vital water source for Southeast Asia. Their condition is a warning bell," he said, urging sustainable development and lifestyle changes.

Volunteers take part in a march during RSS centenary celebrations, in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

RSS to push 5-point action plan

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat announced plans to expand its vyakti nirman (character building) mission and promote the panch parivartan (five-point transformation) initiative. The programme focuses on social harmony, family values, environmental protection, self-reliance, and civic responsibility. Bhagwat urged all sections of society to adopt the initiative, led by swayamsevaks.

PHOTO: ANI

Kerala's former police chief Thomas joins RSS

KOCHI, 2 OCT

Former Kerala Police Chief Jacob Thomas has formally joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as a full-time pracharak. On Mahanavami, 1 October, he appeared at an RSS event in Pallikkara wearing the organisation's traditional uniform. Addressing the gathering, Thomas said the RSS seeks to nurture individuals with cultural strength, which in turn would strengthen society and the nation. He emphasised that the organisation stands beyond caste, religion, language or regional divisions. Thomas, who earlier served as Director of the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau, had entered the BJP in 2021 before choosing to work with the RSS. Other retired Kerala police chiefs, including R Sreelekha and TP Senkumar, have also aligned themselves with the Sangh Parivar. —*PTI*

In Cambodia, Rahul alleges attack on India's democracy

BOGOTA, 2 OCT

Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Thursday strongly criticised the Narendra Modi government, asserting that India's biggest challenge today is the assault on its democracy.

Speaking at an event at EIA University, Colombia, Gandhi pointed to structural flaws in the system and emphasised the need to protect the country's diverse traditions, religions, and languages. "India has strong capabilities in engineering and healthcare, so I am optimistic about the country. But the biggest challenge is the attack on democracy taking place in India," he said.

Gandhi highlighted that India's democratic framework is essential for allowing multiple traditions, customs, and ideas to thrive. "Currently, there is a wholesale attack on this democratic system, which is a major risk. With 16-17 major languages and numerous religions, it is crucial to provide space for these diverse traditions," he added.

Furthermore, Gandhi lashed out at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) duo, saying that 'cowardice' was at the heart of their ideology.

"This is the nature of BJP-RSS. If you notice a statement of the foreign minister, he said, 'China is much more powerful than us. How can I pick a fight with them?' At the heart of the ideology is cowardice," the Congress leader said.

He further referenced Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, recalling an incident in which Savarkar wrote about beating a Muslim man with friends and feeling pleased. Gandhi said, "This illustrates the RSS ideology: to attack the weak and avoid the strong." — *ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

'PUSH FOR SWADESHI'

Buy Khadi for Rs 5,000 annually: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday urged citizens to purchase Khadi products worth at least Rs 5,000 annually, emphasising that it would generate employment for millions and improve livelihoods.

Speaking on Gandhi Jayanti at the Khadi India showroom in Connaught Place, Shah made an online purchase of Khadi products and highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message promoting 'swadeshi' and the 'Make in India' campaign.

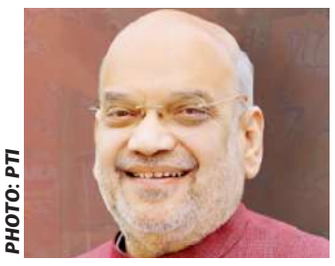


PHOTO: PTI

Shah said millions of families have resolved to avoid foreign goods, and shopkeepers have decided not to sell them. "Every family should buy Khadi products worth at least Rs 5,000 every year. This will provide employment to millions and bring light into their lives," he said.

Referring to Mahatma Gandhi, Shah noted that Khadi and swadeshi were integral to India's freedom movement and helped uplift poor communities. He recalled launching a Khadi revival campaign in Gujarat in 2003 and said since 2014, Khadi has regained popularity among the public, with Khadi Gramodyog achieving a turnover of Rs 1.7 lakh crore.

Shah appealed to citizens to make the use of Khadi and swadeshi part of daily life and pass these values to future generations, stressing their continued relevance for national development. —*PTI*

TWO TN POLICEMEN ARRESTED FOR RAPING ANDHRA WOMAN

TIRUVANNAMALAI, 2 OCT

Two policemen of Tiruvannamalai East Police Station have been arrested and suspended for allegedly raping a woman from Andhra Pradesh, police said on Wednesday.

The incident reportedly occurred near the Tiruvannamalai bypass on Monday evening, when the victim and her mother were travelling to offer prayers at the Arulmigu Arunachaleswarar Temple in a cargo vehicle. During a routine vehicle check, the policemen allegedly took the woman to a secluded location and sexually assaulted her. With the support of locals, the victim's mother admitted her daughter to the district government hospital.

A First Information Report has been filed, and the accused have been remanded in custody. The case has drawn political outrage. AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami criticised the ruling DMK government, describing the incident as indicative of the lack of safety for women in the state. Former BJP Tamil Nadu Chief K Annamalai called the assault "immensely shocking", stating that law and order had deteriorated, leaving women vulnerable even to the police. —*PTI*

BJP to elect Gujarat state chief on 4 Oct

AHMEDABAD, 2 OCT

After months of speculation and a year-long delay, the Gujarat BJP is poised to elect its new state president. The form-filling process will commence on 3 October, with voting scheduled for 4 October. The party's leadership is reportedly considering an OBC leader for the role to counterbalance the Patidar Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and to strategise ahead of local elections in December and the 2027 Assembly elections.

According to sources, the next president is likely to emerge from either Saurashtra or North Gujarat. The significance of the election lies not only in caste and regional balancing but also in managing factional influences from leaders like Amit Shah, Anandiben Patel, and CR Patil, each of whom has substantial sway within the Gujarat BJP. With local elections looming and Anandiben Patel's influential recent visit to Gujarat, where she met state leaders, the stakes are high. —*PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Mob attacks police convoy in Manipur's Chandel

IMPHAL, 2 OCT

A Manipur Police convoy came under attack in Longja village, Chandel district, late on Wednesday night, officials confirmed on Thursday. Windshields of several vehicles, including one assigned to the Additional Superintendent of Police, were damaged during the incident. Officials said Kuki women stood in front of the convoy, preventing it from advancing. The development reflects ongoing tensions in the north-eastern state, where Kuki groups allege police bias towards the Meitei community. Manipur has witnessed deadly ethnic clashes between the two communities since May 2023, leaving at least 260 people dead and thousands displaced. The state remains under President's Rule as violence continues to disrupt peace and security. —*PTI*

YouTuber held for 'spying'

FARIDABAD, 2 OCT

- Known locally for posting videos on the history of Mewat, Wasim Akram allegedly maintained regular contact with Pakistani agents

Police in Palwal, Haryana, have arrested a YouTuber, Wasim Akram, on suspicion of spying for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and its High Commission.

Akram, a resident of Kot village in Palwal district, was detained on Wednesday. Known locally for posting videos on the history of Mewat, he allegedly maintained regular contact with Pakistani agents for the past three years and is accused of supplying them with SIM cards for cross-border communication.

His arrest came days after police apprehended another suspected spy, Taufiq, from Alimev village. Taufiq, accused of passing sensitive information to Pakistan since 2022, was taken into custody on 26 September. During his interrogation, police said he disclosed Akram's name, leading investigators to widen their probe.

Officials said Akram came into contact with a Pakistani handler named Danish in 2021 while applying for a visa. Police have since seized his phone and are working to recover deleted WhatsApp chats, which they believe may reveal incriminating details.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Varun Singla confirmed that both Akram and Taufiq were in touch with the ISI and the Pakistan High Commission through internet calls. He has directed the Palwal crime branch, with assistance from the Intelligence Bureau, to pursue a detailed investigation. Officials have not ruled out further arrests as inquiries continue. –*PTI*

103 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh

BIJAPUR, 2 OCT

A total of 103 Naxalites, including 22 women, surrendered in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Thursday, marking one of the largest single-day surrenders in the region. Among them were 49 cadres carrying a combined bounty exceeding Rs 1 crore.

Police said the Maoists cited disillusionment with the CPI (Maoist)'s "hollow" ideology, growing internal rifts, and the influence of government initiatives as reasons for abandoning the movement. The state's rehabilitation policy, the Bastar police's Poona Margem scheme, and the Niyad Nellanar development programme reportedly played a significant role in their decision.

Senior cadres who gave up arms included divisional committee member Lachhu Punem and four others, each carrying a reward of Rs 8 lakh. Several others carried bounties ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10,000.

Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav confirmed that all were given immediate assistance of Rs 50,000 and would be rehabilitated under state policy. –*PTI*

'DEEPLY IRONICAL'

India slams Pak at UN over its 'human rights criticism'

GENEVA, 2 OCT

India on Wednesday criticised Pakistan at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), calling out Islamabad for its "human rights criticism of India" while urging it to address its own record on minority rights.

Speaking at the 34th meeting of the 60th session in Geneva, Indian diplomat Mohammed Hussain described Pakistan's stance as "deeply ironical." He urged the country to confront "state-sponsored persecution and systematic discrimination against their own religious and ethnic minorities," noting that Pakistan's attempts to fabricate allegations against India only expose its hypocrisy.

India rips Pakistan over its hypocrisy on human rights, calls it 'a country with the worst record' **PHOTO: ANI**

- Asked Geopolitical researcher Josh Bowes cited Pakistan's ranking of 158th on the World Press Freedom Index and referenced the 2025 USCIRF Religious Freedom Report, which recorded over 700 imprisonments on blasphemy charges, a 300 per cent increase from the previous year.

Hussain's remarks came amid renewed security concerns in Pakistan, following an explosion at a Pakistani Taliban compound in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that killed at least 24 people, including ten civilians.

International observers also highlighted Pakistan's human rights challenges. Geopolitical researcher Josh Bowes cited Pakistan's ranking of 158th on the World Press Freedom Index and referenced the 2025 USCIRF Religious Freedom Report, which recorded over 700 imprisonments on blasphemy charges, a 300 per cent increase from the previous year.

Bowes further drew attention to abuses in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, noting that the Baloch National Movement's human rights body, Paank, reported 785 enforced disappearances and 121 killings in the first half of 2025. Additionally, the Pashtun national jirga reported 4,000 missing Pashtuns in the same period. –*Agencies*

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA

Vijaya Dashami, marking the conclusion of Durga Pooja aka Dussehra, was celebrated with grandeur across India. In Kolkata, priests performed rituals at Maddox Square; People click picture as an effigy of the demon king 'Ravana' goes up in flames, in Gurugram; Women in red-bordered sarees participated in Sindoor Khela in New Delhi. Meanwhile, in Kerala, thousands of toddlers were initiated into the world of letters through the Vidyarambham ritual. Guided by priests, scholars and teachers, children wrote their first letters with the mantra 'Hari Sree Ganapathaye Namaha' as Vijayadasami marks the beginning of learning in the southern state ***PHOTOS: PTI***

Week after Ladakh riots, 26 protesters released

Normalcy starts to return; Inquiry to conclude in 4 weeks

LEH, 2 OCT

The government has released 26 men detained during violent protests in Ladakh last week, over demands for statehood and constitutional safeguards as calls for a judicial inquiry into the 24 September violence in Leh intensified on Thursday. Two major Buddhist bodies and the Kargil Bar Association pressed for an impartial probe. The violence, which claimed four lives and left many injured, had led to a week-long curfew in the region.

Authorities said a magisterial inquiry, led by Sub-Divisional Magistrate Nubra Mukul Beniwal, will be completed within four weeks. Meanwhile, normalcy is slowly returning, with markets reopening and curfew relaxed for the full day. However, mobile internet remains suspended, and prohibitory orders under Section 144 continue across Ladakh.

A magisterial inquiry will probe the 24 September Leh violence, in which four people died during protests over statehood demands ***PHOTO: PTI***

The Ladakh Buddhist Association and All Ladakh Gonpa Association paid tribute to the deceased and to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary. They demanded a judicial probe into alleged police excesses, adequate compensation for victims' families, and the release of detained climate activist Sonam Wangchuk.

LBA President Chering Dorjay confirmed that 26 youths have been granted bail, while around 30 remain in custody. He added that legal advisor Haji Ghulam Mustafa has been allowed to meet Wangchuk, currently lodged in a Rajasthan jail under the National Security Act.

The Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, which have been agitating for statehood and Sixth Schedule status, have withdrawn from upcoming talks with the Centre, demanding a judicial inquiry and release of all detainees before resuming dialogue.

Meanwhile, the Kargil Bar Association is observing a week-long strike in solidarity with Leh residents and has offered free legal aid to victims. The association is boycotting court proceedings until 6 October.

Though peace prevails in Leh, internet shutdowns and restrictions remain in place to ensure law and order. *—PTI*

Scolded for mobile games, Delhi teen hangs self

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

A 15-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide at his home in Adarsh Nagar in the northwest area of Delhi after being scolded by his sister for playing mobile games, police said on Thursday. The incident was reported to the local police station on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northwest) Bhisham Singh said preliminary inquiry revealed the boy, identified as Adarsh, reportedly hanged himself from a ceiling fan following an argument with his elder sister over neglecting his studies. Adarsh, a Class 9 student, was rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

Police said proceedings under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) have been initiated. His father is employed with an export company in Kundli, Sonepat. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support

PHOTO: ANI

Veteran leader and freedom fighter Dr Parikh no more

MUMBAI, 2 OCT

Veteran socialist leader and freedom fighter Dr GG Parikh, founder of the Yusuf Meherally Centre (YMC) near Panvel, passed away at his Mumbai residence early Thursday. He was 101. Parikh dedicated his life to rural development and empowering marginalised communities.

Besides participating in the freedom struggle, he was actively involved in the Samyukta Maharashtra and Goa Liberation movements. He was jailed for 10 months during the Quit India movement and arrested again during the Emergency. YMC General Secretary Madhukar Mohite said Parikh is survived by a daughter and a grandson. His body will be kept at Janata Kendra in Tardeo, Mumbai Central, from 1 pm to 5 pm on Thursday for public homage before being donated to JJ Hospital. *—PTI*

IMD issues red alert for 7 districts in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, 2 OCT

Heavy rain lashed Odisha on Thursday as a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal moved closer to the coast. The IMD issued a red alert for seven districts, Puri, Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Kalahandi, and Kandhamal, warning of extremely heavy rainfall exceeding 20 cm till Friday morning. Sixteen districts, including Khurda, Cuttack, and Balasore, are on orange alert, while seven western districts are under yellow alert. Authorities have deployed teams to manage possible floods and landslides, with one reported in Gajapati. The system may cross between Gopalpur and Paradip tonight. Fishermen are advised against venturing out till 3 October. *—PTI*

Internet suspended in UP's Bareilly

BAREILLY, 2 OCT

Security was tightened across four districts of Bareilly division in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday ahead of Dussehra, with police, PAC, and RAF personnel deployed on streets and drones monitoring from the air.

The government has also ordered a 48-hour suspension of internet services in Bareilly, officials said.

According to a home department notification, mobile internet, broadband, and SMS services will remain suspended from 3 pm on 2 October to 3 pm on 4 October. Home Secretary Gaurav Dayal said the order aims to prevent misuse of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, and messaging services to spread rumours or incite communal tension.

The move follows unrest on 26 September, when around 2,000 people gathered outside a mosque in the Kotwali area after Friday prayers, leading to clashes with police and stone-pelting.

The confrontation was triggered by the cancellation of a protest over the 'I Love Muhammad' poster controversy called by cleric Tauqeer Khan. *—PTI*

Green cess for essential goods carriers a must in Delhi now

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Supreme Court has withdrawn a decade-old exemption allowing commercial vehicles carrying essential commodities to enter Delhi without paying the Environment Compensation Cess (ECC).

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran and Justice NV Anjaria passed the order on 26 September, which was made public recently. The exemption, granted in October, 2015, was found to cause 'genuine operational difficulties' and to undermine the purpose of the levy.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had sought removal of the exemption, arguing that enforcement was impractical. It submitted that

vehicles had to be stopped and physically verified to confirm if they carried essential commodities such as vegetables, fruits, milk, grains, eggs, poultry, or ice. This process led to prolonged stoppages, emissions, and worsening air pollution.

Agreeing with the contention, the bench observed that no effective mechanism exists to verify goods without halting vehicles. "All vehicles are required to be stopped at checkposts and subjected to physical verification, which results in prolonged stoppages and aggravates the problem of air pollution," it noted. The court added that the levy was modest and unlikely to significantly affect consumer prices.

The order was passed in the long-pending 1985 PIL filed by environmentalist MC Mehta on pollution in Delhi-NCR.

In the same hearing, the court also allowed certified manufacturers to produce green crackers but directed that these cannot be sold in Delhi-NCR without approval. It further asked the Centre to review the blanket ban on firecracker manufacturing after consulting all stake holders. *— PTI*

Marriage hall, mosque demolished in Sambhal

Bulldozer razes an illegal marriage hall built on public land, in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh ***PHOTO: PTI***

SAMBHAL, 2 OCT

Authorities in the Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh on Thursday demolished a marriage hall and a madrassa built illegally on pond land in Raa Ya village under Asmoli police limits, officials said.

The district administration has also given four days to remove encroachment from a mosque constructed illegally on reserved land, with mosque committee members reportedly beginning the dismantling voluntarily.

Tehsildar Dhirendra Pratap Singh said the hall, spanning approximately 2,300 sqm, was demolished following a court order. The mosque, occupying around 550 sq m, was allowed a four-day window by the district magistrate.

- The district administration has given four days to remove encroachment from a mosque constructed illegally

Two prior notices had been issued, but the occupants failed to provide ownership documents. A demolition order was issued on 2 September, followed by a 30-day grace period.

Yaseen, a mosque committee member, confirmed the agreement to vacate the land within four days. Superintendent of Police Krishna Kumar Vishnoi noted the land is classified as pond area.

"Despite the 30-day notice, no voluntary action was taken. Drone surveillance and public announcements were made before the demolition," he said. Both the marriage hall and madrassa were deemed illegal and removed by the anti-encroachment team. *—PTI*

GOLDY BRAR GANG INVOLVED

Plot to kill Munawar foiled, 2 arrested

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

Delhi Police arrested two alleged contract killers linked to the Rohit Godara-Goldy Brar-Virender Charan gang, accused of plotting to assassinate stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqi. Reportedly the gangster believe his jokes on Hindu gods hurt the community. The arrests followed a gunfight on Jaitpur-Kalindi Kunj Road on Thursday.

The suspects Rahul, 29, from Panipat and Sahil, 37, from Bhiwani, Haryana, were intercepted by Special Cell's Counter Intelligence Unit. The team received information that shooters were seen in Delhi. Police set a trap. The shooters were on a bike around 3am when police asked them to stop, but they opened fired. The cops shot the criminals in the leg before nabbing them.

The gang was also behind the recent firing outside actress Disha Patani's Bareilly home.

Rahul is already wanted in a triple murder case in Yamunanagar and has prior weapons charges in Rajasthan. Sahil faces multiple financial crime cases in Haryana.

Police said the duo had been diverted to Delhi after a failed attempt to target a social media influencer in Mumbai due to communication issues with their handlers abroad.

Reportedly, the shooters had planned to target Faruqui in Bengaluru on 19 September and were waiting for him outside the event venue. But he left in a different car.

Faruqi, 33, is winner of 'Bigg Boss' 2024. He previously faced legal troubles, including a 2021 hate speech case and a 2024 detention in a Mumbai hookah bar raid. *—PTI*

AUTOPSY REPORT

'Zubeen died while swimming, not scuba diving'

SINGAPORE, 2 OCT

Singer-musician Zubeen Garg died from drowning while swimming off a Singapore island, and not during scuba diving as earlier reported, media said Thursday.

The Assam-based artist, 52, was in Singapore to mark the 60th year of India–Singapore diplomatic relations and celebrate the India–ASEAN Year of Tourism and North East India Festival. He died on 19 September.

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) provided the autopsy report and preliminary findings to the Indian High Commission, confirming drowning as the cause of death. SPF had earlier ruled out foul play. Legal expert Ng Kai Ling noted that while there is no statutory definition of 'foul play,' the SPF's statement indicates no suspicion of murder or criminal violence.

On 19 September, Garg was swimming at St John's Island and was pulled unconscious from the water before being rushed to Singapore General Hospital, where he died the same day. Reports indicate he initially wore a life jacket, removed it, and jumped into the water again. The SPF advised the public not to share related videos or images.

- The Singapore Police Force (SPF) provided the autopsy report and preliminary findings to the Indian High Commission, confirming drowning as the cause of death

Meanwhile, Assam police arrested Garg's manager Siddhartha Sharma and festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta in Delhi. Both were remanded to 14-day custody in Guwahati. They face charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, criminal conspiracy, and causing death by negligence.

Garg's wife, Garima Saikia Garg, performing rituals in Jorhat, expressed satisfaction that the accused were in Assam and trust in the investigative team. The Assam government has set up a 10-member SIT to probe the circumstances of Garg's death in Singapore. *— PTI*

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar pays tribute to singer Zubeen Garg in Jorhat, Assam, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Thane Tribunal awards ₹53L in accident case

THANE, 2 OCT

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal in Maharashtra's Thane has awarded over Rs 53 lakh as compensation to the family of a 29-year-old man killed in a 2022 road accident.

The accident occurred on Ghodbunder Road when the victim, Sanchez Keith Peacock, a senior operations representative at Convergys, was riding his bike home. A speeding tempo rammed his vehicle from behind, killing him on the spot. The tempo driver fled.

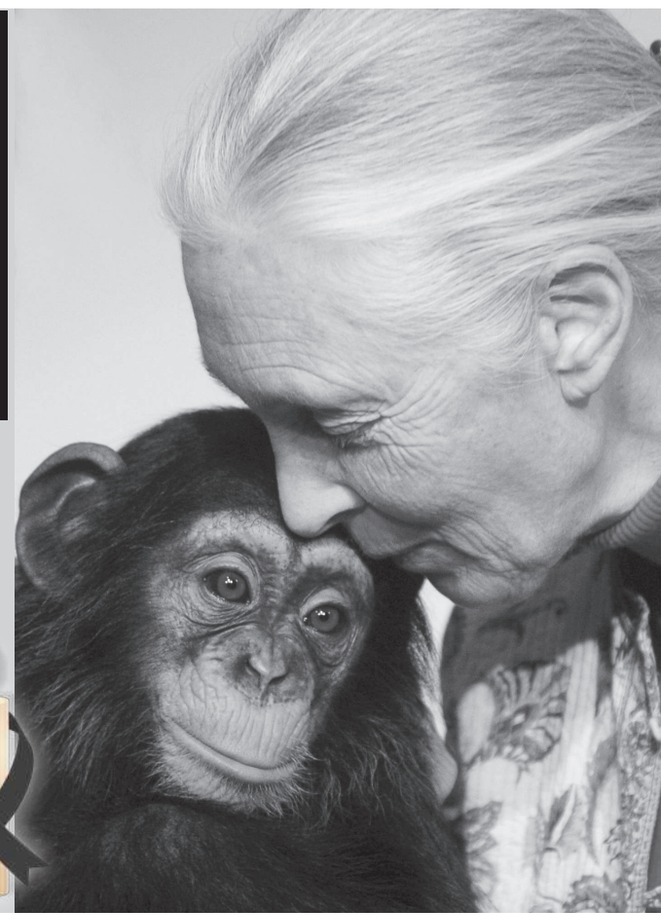
Peacock's parents and brother filed a claim petition against the tempo's owner and its insurer. The insurance company contested liability, alleging the victim was riding rashly, and lacked a valid licence. However, Tribunal member RV Mohite, on 26 September, rejected this.

The tribunal held the accident was solely due to the tempo driver's rash driving. It awarded Rs 53,20,487 to the family, including Rs 34.55 lakh for loss of future income and Rs 17.27 lakh towards future prospects. *—PTI*

JANE GOODALL

GENTLE ACTIVIST WHOSE LOVE FOR ANIMALS MADE THE WORLD BETTER

3 APRIL, 1934 - 1 OCT, 2025



Jane Goodall, the intellectual, soft-spoken conservationist renowned for her groundbreaking, immersive chimpanzee field research in which she documented the primates' distinct personalities and use of tools, has died. She was 91.

The environmental advocate became a beloved household name who transcended generations through her appearances in documentaries and on television, as well as her travels to address packed auditoriums around the world.

The Jane Goodall Institute announced the primatologist's death Wednesday in an Instagram post. She died of natural causes while in California on a US speaking tour.

Her discoveries "revolutionised science, and she was a tireless advocate for the protection and restoration of our natural world," it said.

While living among chimpanzees in Africa decades ago, Goodall documented them doing activities previously believed to be exclusive to humans. Her observations and subsequent magazine and documentary appearances in the 1960s transformed how the world perceived not only humans' closest living biological relatives but also the emotional and social complexity of all animals, while propelling her into the public consciousness.

"Out there in nature by myself, when you're alone, you can become part of nature and your humanity doesn't get in the way," she told The Associated Press in 2021. "It's almost like an out-of-body experience when suddenly you hear different sounds and you smell different smells and you're actually part of this amazing tapestry of life."

NEVER LOST HOPE FOR FUTURE

She had been scheduled to meet with students and teachers on Wednesday to launch the planting of 5,000 trees around wildfire burn zones in the Los Angeles area. Organisers learned of her death as the event was to begin at EF Academy in Pasadena, said spokesperson Shawna Marino. The first tree was planted in Goodall's name after a moment of silence.

"I don't think there's any better way to honour her legacy than having a thousand children gathered for her," Marino said.

Goodall in her later years devoted decades to education and advocacy on humanitarian causes and protecting the natural world. In her British accent, she was known for balancing the grim realities of the climate crisis with a sincere message of hope for the future.

From her base in the British coastal town of Bournemouth, she travelled nearly 300 days a year, even after she turned 90, for public speeches. Between more serious messages, her speeches often featured her whooping like a chimpanzee or lamenting that Tarzan chose the wrong Jane.

Tributes from animal rights organisations, political leaders and admirers poured in following news of her death.

"I'm deeply saddened to learn about the passing of Jane Goodall, our dear Messenger of Peace. She is leaving an extraordinary legacy for humanity & our planet," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

Nature broadcaster Chris Packham reflected on her relentless advocacy until the very end.

"In many ways Jane just died on the job," he said. "The job that her life became. And that was protecting life on earth."

AMONG THE CHIMPANZES

While first studying chimps in Tanzania in the early 1960s, Goodall was known for her unconventional approach. She didn't simply observe them from afar but immersed herself in every aspect of their lives. She fed them and gave them names instead of numbers, which some scientists criticized.

Her findings were circulated to millions when she first appeared on the cover of National Geographic in 1963 and then in a popular documentary. A collection of photos of Goodall in the field helped her and even some of the chimps become famous. One iconic image showed her crouching across from the infant chimpanzee named Flint. Each has arms outstretched, reaching for the other.

In 1972, the Sunday Times published an obituary for Flo, Flint's mother and the dominant matriarch. Flint died soon after showing signs of grief and losing weight.

"What the chimps have taught me over the years is they're so like us. They've blurred the line between humans and animals," she said in 1997.

This photo of Jane Goodall with infant chimp Flint challenged scientific norms **PHOTO: HUGO VAN LAWICK**

University of St Andrews primatologist Catherine Hobaiter, who studies communication in chimpanzees, said that when she first heard Goodall speak, it transformed her view of science.

"It was the first time as a young scientist working with wild apes and wild chimpanzees that I got to hear that it was OK to feel something," she said.

Goodall earned top civilian honours from a number of countries. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2025 by then-US President Joe Biden and in 2021 won the prestigious Templeton Prize, which honours individuals whose life's work embodies a fusion of science and spirituality.

The Humane World for Animals said Wednesday that Goodall's influence on the animal protection community was immeasurable.

"Her work on behalf of primates and all animals will never be forgotten," said Kitty Block, president and CEO of the group formerly the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International.

A LIFE UNLIKE OTHER'S

Born in London in 1934, Goodall said her fascination with animals began around when she learned to crawl. In her book, "In the Shadow of Man," she described an early memory of hiding in a henhouse to see a chicken lay an egg. She was there so long her mother reported her missing to police.

She bought her first book — Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan of the Apes" — when she was 10 and soon made up her mind about her future: Live with wild animals in Africa.

That plan stayed with her through a secretarial course when she was 18 and two different jobs. By 1957, she accepted an invitation to travel to a farm in Kenya.

There she met the famed anthropologist and paleontologist Louis Leakey at a natural history museum in Nairobi. He gave her a job as an assistant secretary.

Three years later, despite Goodall not having a college degree, Leakey asked if she would be interested in studying chimpanzees in what is now Tanzania. She told the AP that he chose her "because he wanted an open mind."

The beginning was filled with complications. British authorities insisted she have a companion, so she brought her mother. The chimps fled if she got within 460ms of them. She also spent weeks sick from what she believed was malaria.

Eventually she gained the animals' trust. By the fall of 1960, she observed the chimpanzee named David Greybeard make a tool from twigs to fish termites from a nest. It was previously believed that only humans made and used tools.

She also found that chimps have individual personalities and share humans' emotions of pleasure, joy, sadness and fear. She documented bonds between mothers and infants, sibling rivalry and male dominance. She found there was no sharp line between humans and the animal kingdom.

In later years, she discovered chimpanzees engage in a type of warfare, and in 1987 she and her staff observed a chimp "adopt" a 3-year-old orphan that wasn't closely related.

Her work moved into global advocacy after she watched a disturbing film of experiments on laboratory animals in 1986.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020 and halted her in-person events, she began podcasting from her childhood home in England.

"If one wants to reach people; If one wants to change attitudes, you have to reach the heart," she said during her first episode. "You can reach the heart by telling stories, not by arguing with people's intellects." —*PTI*

Jane Goodall married photographer Hugo van Lawick in 1964. The couple had one child, Hugo Eric Louis; Former US president Joe Biden Goodall awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor in 2025; Goodall met climate activist Greta Thunberg in 2020 **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

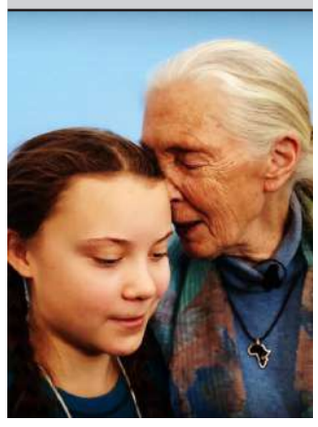
IN HER WORDS

If one wants to reach people; If one wants to change attitudes, you have to reach the heart. You can reach the heart by telling stories, not by arguing with people's intellects.

You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

And if we dare to look into those eyes, then we shall feel their suffering in our hearts. More and more people have seen that appeal and felt it in their hearts.... And if, one by one, we help them, the hurting animals, the desperate humans, then together we shall alleviate so much of the hunger, fear, and pain in the world.

I do believe there is a window of time when we can at least slow down climate change and loss of biodiversity.... Without hope we will fall into apathy and do nothing



LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Classical music's spiritual voice Chhannulal Mishra goes silent

3 AUG, 1936 - 2 OCT, 2025

Pandit Chhannulal Mishra, one of the greats of Hindustani classical music who melded folk and ragas, culture and devotion, and sang to us of the joy of Holi, the yearning for 'sawan' and timeless tales from the Ramayana, died on Thursday. He was 89.

That Thursday was Dasara, the day in the Ram katha when good vanquished evil, was perhaps a coincidence that the vocalist, described by some as a revered spiritual voice of the Banaras gharana and the voice of Kashi, would have enjoyed.

The Padma Bhushan awardee, known for his rare gift of turning his performances into a conversation with the divine and his masterful command over various music styles, breathed his last around 4am.

Mishra, who lost his wife Manorama and a daughter, Sangeeta, during Covid, had been staying in Mirzapur for some time with his youngest daughter's family. He leaves behind his son, tabla player Ramkumar Mishra, and three daughters.

Mishra's health deteriorated late Wednesday night, his family said.

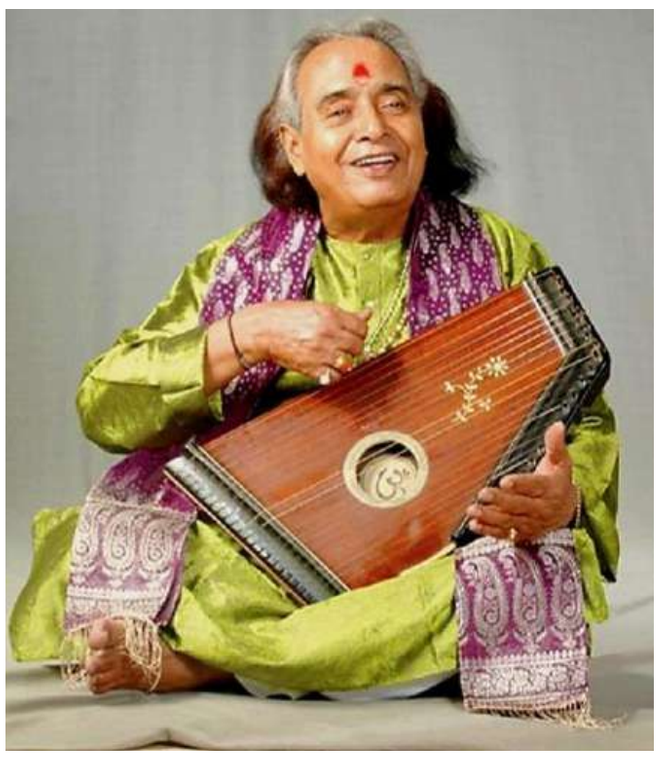
Though trained in the Kirana gharana's 'khayal gayaki', Mishra earned wider acclaim as a master of thumri, while also making significant contributions to other forms such as dadra, chaiti, kajri and bhajan.

His deeply moving renditions include 'Sawan Jhar Lagela Dheere Dheere', a soulful kajri steeped in monsoon longing, 'Kaise Sajan Ghar Jaibe', a heart-wrenching thumri exploring themes of separation and devotion, and his powerful sohar renditions -- traditional folk songs that celebrate the joy of childbirth. One of his most popular perhaps is the evocative "Barsan Laagi Badriya" with Girija Devi.

A purist, Mishra mostly stayed away from lending his voice to Bollywood songs, However, brought classical richness to some tracks like 'Saans Albeli' and 'Kaun Si Dor' for the 2011 film 'Aarakshan', successfully bridging the gap between traditional and popular music.

Born in 1936 in Hariharpur village, Azamgarh, Mishra was initiated into music by his father, the late Pandit Badri Prasad Mishra. He was later trained in the Kirana gharana style under Ustad Abdul Ghani Khan, and was further mentored by renowned musicologist Thakur Jaidev Singh, who helped refine his understanding of the deeper nuances of Indian classical music.

His ties to music also extended into his marital family -- his father-in-law was the acclaimed tabla maestro Pandit Anokhe Lal.



Vocalist Pandit Chhannulal Mishra had a renowned career spanning six decades; He received the Padma Vibhushan award for Art from former president Ram Nath Kovind in 2020 **PHOTO: PTI**

An immensely knowledgeable artist, with an illustrious career spanning over six decades, Mishra expressed his concern over the declining interest among the youth in pursuing classical arts in an interview with PTI in 2020.

It was a trend he believed was threatening the survival of a tradition that has represented India's rich cultural heritage for centuries.

"Nobody is coming to learn these days... they have become masters in their heads. They think that just because they can sing a 'taan' better than guru ji, there's no need to learn. What they don't understand is learning an art requires seriousness, it requires a great deal of patience," he said.

In her tribute to the late artiste, celebrated folk singer Malini Awasthi said he was one of the first artists in the classical tradition to earn deep respect across diverse forms -- from khayal and thumri to bhajans dedicated to Bholenath and Devi.

With his passing, "Kashi's folk voice has gone silent", she said.

Awasthi described him not only as a "master musician" but also as a "devout spiritualist", noting that it was this rare blend of musical brilliance and devotion that led audiences to request devotional songs alongside classical pieces during his performances.

Despite his widespread fame and regular invitations to perform in cities far and wide, she noted that he led a humble life, "residing in a small room barely large enough to fit three people".

"Mishra ji once said, 'All the children ask me to move, but how can I leave my God behind?' He would often recite sacred verses like Manas Ki Chaupai during his conversations. This humility and spiritual grounding were as much a part of his legacy as his profound musical genius," she said.

Actor-singer Durga Jasraj, daughter of the legendary Indian classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj, described his singing style as "distinct" and his stage presence as "magical" -- especially the way he would narrate the mythological backstories behind the songs he performed.

"He truly was one of the great pillars of Indian classical music. I got the news from his son; he had been unwell and bedridden for years. While it may be a relief to his body, we have lost a remarkable vocalist and an irreplaceable artist," she added.

Santoor maestro and music composer Pandit Abhay Sopori said Mishra's unparalleled artistry in khayal, thumri, dadra and devotional traditions enriched India's cultural heritage. "His loss leaves a void, but he will continue to inspire generations". —*PTI*

Internet gradually returns to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, 2 OCT

Confusion surrounds the state of internet connectivity in Afghanistan, after some networks were apparently restored on Wednesday following an outage that began Monday. The Taliban WhatsApp group made its first response to the outage, saying that cellphone services are gradually being restored. The statement quoted officials from the telecommunications technical department as saying that the relevant teams are continuously working to fully restore the services. Internet advocacy group Netblocks on Wednesday posted an update on X, saying, "Live network data show the partial restoration of internet connectivity in Afghanistan amid outcry after a two-day national telecoms blackout; the incident comes as the Taliban leadership applies new 'immorality' rules on telco operators."*—PTI*

Two die in Morocco's 'Gen-Z' protests

RABAT, 2 OCT

Youth-led anti-government protests in Morocco escalated into violence, resulting in two fatalities in the town of Leqliaa on Wednesday night. Local authorities stated that the deceased were "troublemakers" shot by police in self-defence during clashes, although eyewitness accounts do not support this claim. The protests, which stem from dissatisfaction with public services and corruption, have persisted for five nights. Organised by the leaderless "Gen Z 212" movement, the protests highlight the contrast between investment for upcoming global events and the dilapidated state of schools and hospitals. Despite appeals from protest organisers for peaceful action, escalating violence has led to 1,000 arrests, fuelling further outrage among the youth. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Duke of Luxembourg to abdicate throne

LUXEMBOURG, 2 OCT

A new era begins as Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg abdicates the throne after 25 years, passing it to his eldest son, Guillaume, on Friday. The 70-year-old Henri navigated significant challenges, including the 2008 financial crisis, alongside his wife, Grand Duchess Maria Teresa. Guillaume, 43, educated in London, Switzerland, France, and Sandhurst, will be crowned in a ceremonial oath to Luxembourg's constitution. Guillaume faces issues like an ageing population and soaring housing costs while symbolically leading a 1,000-strong army. Historians note his role mainly serves as a political symbol. *—PTI*

2 dead, 3 seriously injured in UK synagogue attack

LONDON, 2 OCT

Two victims have died and three others are in serious condition following an attack at a synagogue in northern England on the holiest day of the Jewish year, Yom Kippur. The incident occurred at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Crumpsall on Thursday morning. Greater Manchester Police responded to reports of a man being stabbed and a vehicle driving towards congregants shortly after 9.30am, leading to officers firing shots, reportedly hitting the suspect. Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed his horror, stating, "The fact that this has taken place on Yom Kippur makes it all the more horrific." A bomb disposal team was deployed due to concerns that the suspect may have been carrying explosives. The situation remains under investigation. *—PTI*

Layoffs imminent as US govt shuts down

Trump cuts budget to Democrat states; Policymakers cannot access economic data

WASHINGTON, 2 OCT

President Donald Trump has seized on the government shutdown as an opportunity to reshape the federal workforce and punish detractors, by threatening mass firings of workers and suggesting "irreversible" cuts to programmes important to Democrats. Thursday is day two of the shutdown.

Rather than simply furlough employees, as is usually done during any lapse of funds, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said layoffs were "imminent".

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced it was putting on hold roughly USD 18 billion of infrastructure funds for New York's subway and Hudson Tunnel projects — in the hometown of the Democratic leaders of the US House and Senate. Trump also withheld USD 8 billion for green-energy projects in 16 Democratic-run states, including California and Illinois.

"(Democrats are) taking a risk by having a shutdown," Trump said during an event at the White House.

OMB Director Russ Vough told House GOP lawmakers Wednesday afternoon that layoffs would be starting in the next day or two.

The Democrats are holding fast to their demands to preserve health care funding, and refusing to back a bill that fails to do so, warning of price spikes for millions of Americans nationwide. They met with Trump and Vice President JD Vance earlier, but did not make any breakthrough.

Trump and the Congressional leaders are not expected to meet again soon and the House is set to resume session only next week.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated roughly 7,50,000 federal workers would be furloughed on any given day during the shutdown, a loss of USD 400 million daily in wages.

The shutdown will also deprive policymakers and investors of economic data vital to their decision-making.

The absence will be felt almost immediately, as the government's monthly jobs report scheduled for release Friday will likely be delayed. A weekly report on the number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits will also be postponed. *—PTI*

Vice President JD Vance blamed Democrats for the US government shutdown, saying they "did nothing" to help Trump lower drug prices and instead wanted billions to help illegal immigrants **PHOTO: X**

Trump vows to defend Qatar after Israel's strike

US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order vowing to use all measures including US military action to defend the energy-rich nation of Qatar — though it remains unclear just what weight the pledge will carry.

The text of the order, available Wednesday on the White House's website but dated Monday, appears to be another measure by Trump to assure the Qataris following Israel's surprise attack on the country. The order vows to "guarantee the security and territorial integrity of the state of Qatar against external attack."

"The US shall regard any armed attack on the territory, sovereignty or critical infrastructure of the state of Qatar as a threat to the peace and security of the US," the order says. "In the event of such an attack, the US shall take all lawful and appropriate measures — including diplomatic, economic, and, if necessary, military — to defend the interests of the US and of the state of Qatar and to restore peace and stability." *—PTI*

This frame grab from video released by the Global Sumud flotilla shows Israeli navy soldiers aboard one of the vessels after it was intercepted as it approached the coast of Gaza early Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Those in Gaza are terrorists: IDF

JERUSALEM, 2 OCT

Israel killed at least 20 people in Gaza on Thursday, Al Jazeera reported, as the Defence Force Minister Israel Katz issued a final warning to residents of Gaza City, telling them to leave through designated checkpoints or face the military's "full force".

"Those who remain in Gaza will be considered terrorists and terror supporters," Katz said on X. "This is the last opportunity for Gaza residents who wish to do so to move south and leave Hamas terrorists isolated in Gaza City itself, facing the IDF's ongoing operations at full force."

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Wednesday that it had temporarily suspended operations in Gaza City, just as the NGO Doctors Without Borders (known by its French acronym, MSF) did last week. *—Agencies*

Palestinians mourn at the funeral of their relatives who were killed in Israeli airstrike on Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip **PHOTO:PTI**

Israeli interception of Flotilla draws global ire

JERUSALEM, 2 OCT

Supporters of the Global Sumud Flotilla took to the streets in several major cities late Wednesday, after news that Israel intercepted the ships broke. Demonstrators voiced their support in Rome, Istanbul, Athens, Greece, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. More protests were expected Thursday, and Italy's largest union called for a one-day general strike on Friday.

The flotilla, which started out with more than 40 boats and nearly 450 activists, aimed "to break Israel's illegal siege and end the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people." Israel's Foreign Ministry dismissed it as a "provocation," saying that various countries have offered to deliver the aid the boats were carrying.

Several nations, including Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan and others condemned Israel's interception of the flotilla.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry described the interceptions as an "act of terrorism" and a severe breach of international law in a statement late Wednesday. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry also called the interception a violation of international law and a threat to civilian lives.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced late Wednesday that his government would expel Israel's diplomatic delegation in the South American country and terminate a free trade agreement with Israel over the interception. Two Colombian citizens are taking part in the flotilla.

Italy, France, Poland and other European nations, which had warned the activists not to continue the journey and avoid confrontation with Israel, said they were working with Israeli diplomatic authorities to ensure their citizens were transferred to land and deported home swiftly.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, one of Israel's staunchest allies, on Thursday slammed Italian unions for their decision to call a general strike on Friday in solidarity with the flotilla.

"I continue to believe that all this brings no benefit to the Palestinian people. On the other hand, I understand that it will bring a lot of problems to Italian citizens," Meloni said.

Earlier, live broadcasts from the activists showed Israeli boats approaching their vessels, spraying them with water canons and flashing bright lights before troops boarded the flotilla. *—PTI*

Prominent figures on the Sumud

Nearly 1,000 activists, politicians, doctors, journalists, and artists from 44 countries were aboard 50 of the Global Sumud Flotila's ships. Notable members include Swedish activist Greta Thunberg; Bangladeshi photographer Shahidul Alam; Nelson Mandela's grandson Mandla Mandela; 'Game of Thrones' actor Liam Cunningham; 'Thelma and Louise' actress Susan Sarandon; and former mayor of Barcelona Ada Colau among others.

A Russian 'Giatsint-S' self-propelled gun fires towards Ukrainian positions on an undisclosed location in Ukraine, on Thursday **PHOTO:PTI**

Russian drones cause blackout near Chernobyl

KYIV, 2 OCT

Russia's sustained bombardment of Ukraine's power grid is deepening concerns about the safety of the country's nuclear facilities after a drone knocked out power for more than three hours at the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and as Europe's biggest atomic power plant remains disconnected from the grid, officials said.

Neither Chernobyl nor the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is working, but they require a constant power supply to run crucial cooling systems for spent fuel rods in order to avoid a potential nuclear incident.

A blackout could also blind the radiation monitoring systems, installed to boost security at Chernobyl and operated by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"Russia is deliberately creating the threat of radiation incidents," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, criticising the IAEA and its chief, Rafael Mariano Grossi, for what he described as weak responses.

He said Russians launched over 20 Shahed drones against energy infrastructure in Slavutych.

Meanwhile, the Washington Journal reported that the US has agreed to provide intelligence to allow Ukraine to strike targets deep inside Russian territory. *—PTI*

55 trapped under fallen Indonesian school

SIDOARJO, 2 OCT

Rescuers wearing hard hats crawled into tight passages of concrete rubble, chipping away debris with hand tools to try to reach survivors days after they were trapped in Monday's collapse of an Islamic school's prayer hall in Indonesia.

National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement Thursday morning that 59 people are still buried in the rubble. The revisions were due to various factors, such as some people listed as missing confirmed to have survived or to have not been at the scene when the collapse occurred. The death toll was also confirmed Thursday to be five, not six, after data from hospitals were verified, Muhari said.

Of about 105 injured, more than two dozen are still hospitalised, with many said to have suffered head injuries and broken bones.

The structure fell on top of hundreds of people Monday in the prayer hall at the century-old al Khoziny Islamic boarding school in Sidoarjo, on the eastern side of Indonesia's Java island.

The students were mostly boys in grades seven to 12, between ages 12 and 19. *—PTI*

Rescuers walk to the site where a building under construction collapsed at an Islamic boarding school in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia, Thursday **PHOTO:PTI**

TOLL LIKELY TO RISE

Search on after Philippines quake kills 72

BOGO, 2 OCT

Rescuers used backhoes and sniffer dogs to look for survivors in collapsed houses and other damaged buildings in the central Philippines after an earthquake killed at least 72 people and injured more than 200 others.

The death toll was expected to rise from the 6.9 magnitude quake that hit about 10pm Tuesday and trapped an unspecified number of residents in the hard-hit city of Bogo and outlying rural towns in Cebu province.

Sporadic rain and damaged bridges and roads have hampered the race to save lives.

On Wednesday night, rescuers in orange and yellow hard hats used spotlights, a backhoe and bare hands to sift through the rubble of concrete slabs, broken wood and twisted iron bars for hours in a collapsed building in Bogo city.

No survivor was found.

The earthquake occurred at a dangerously shallow depth of 5kms and was centred about 19kms northeast of Bogo, a coastal city of about 90,000 people in Cebu province where officials reported about half of the known deaths.

Schools and government offices were closed in the quake-hit cities and towns while the safety of buildings were checked. More than 600 aftershocks have been detected after Tuesday night's temblor, Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology director Teresito Bacolcol said.

The Philippines, one of the world's most disaster-prone countries, is often hit by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of seismic faults around the ocean. The archipelago is also lashed by about 20 typhoons and storms each year. *—PTI*

Rescuers search for survivors underneath rubble in Bogo, Philippines, Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: ANI

NPS delivers 13% returns in equity schemes: FM

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

National Pension System (NPS) has delivered over 13 per cent average annual returns in equity schemes since inception, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said at the NPS Diwas conference in New Delhi. Corporate debt and government securities schemes have returned around 9 per cent annually, making NPS a globally attractive, low-cost retirement tool. Sitharaman highlighted NPS's portability, transparency, and flexibility, crucial for informal and gig economy workers. With minimum contributions as low as Rs 1,000 annually, it offers universal access. The upgraded D-Remit facility now enables same-day NAV credit, avoiding market gain losses. Launched in 2004, NPS shifted India to a defined-contribution pension model. *—ANI*

Banking sector earnings to rebound from FY26

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

India's banking sector is set for earnings recovery from H2FY26, following a muted Q2 marked by margin pressure, soft credit demand, and falling profits, according to a Motilal Oswal report. Systemic credit growth stood at 10.3 per cent YoY in September, with FY26 growth projected at 11 per cent, rising to 12.5 per cent in FY27 on lower borrowing costs and tax reliefs. Private banks are expected to post a 7.3 per cent YoY profit dip in Q2FY26, while PSBs may see a 7.1 per cent fall. NIMs and treasury gains remain under pressure, though credit costs may ease from H2. Overall sector profits are forecast to grow at a 17.7 per cent CAGR over FY26–28, driven by easing funding costs.*—ANI*

Amid global uncertainties, IT sector sees muted growth

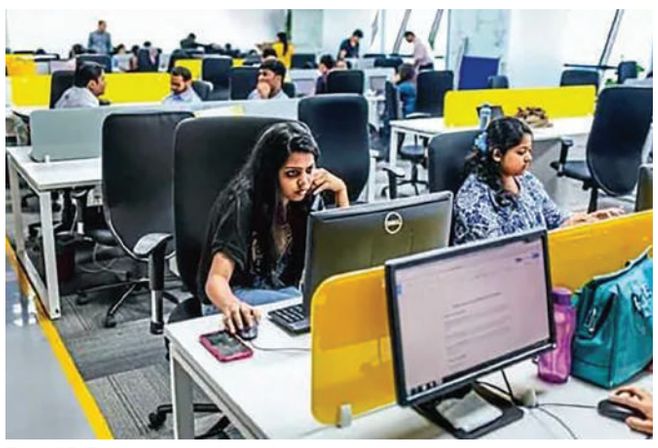
Sector to rebound in FY27, driven by AI advancements

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Indian IT sector is facing subdued growth in FY26, driven by global macroeconomic uncertainty, cautious client spending, and project delays, according to HSBC Global Research. Revenue guidance for FY26 remains muted at 1–5 per cent, with major firms like TCS, Infosys, and HCLTech reporting healthy deal pipelines but soft near-term demand.

Geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and cost optimisation efforts in key verticals such as BFSI and automotive have led to project deferrals. The NSE IT index has underperformed broader benchmarks over the past year, reflecting investor caution.

HSBC, however, forecasts a turnaround in FY27, with improved macro conditions in the US and Europe and rising demand for enterprise-scale artificial intelligence (AI) adoption. AI is expected to be the key growth driver, shifting from productivity gains to broader business transformation.



The NSE IT index has underperformed broader benchmarks over the past year, reflecting investor caution **PHOTO: ANI**

Accenture nearly doubled Gen AI bookings to $5.9 billion in FY25. Infosys secured $3.8 billion in large deals in Q1FY26, while Wipro reported $5 billion in bookings, including two mega deals. TCS posted a Q1FY26 TCV of $9.4 billion across verticals, despite prevailing uncertainty.

A 200–300 basis point revenue growth improvement is projected in FY27 as digital transformation and AI-led services gain traction.

TCS restructures workforce, offers severance

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is offering severance packages of up to two years' salary to long-serving employees amid ongoing workforce restructuring, Moneycontrol reported. While the company cut around 2 per cent of staff earlier this year, not all bench employees are being laid off—only those unallocated for over eight months.

A new 35-day bench policy was introduced in June, capping non-billable time. Affected employees will receive three months' notice pay, plus severance ranging from six months to two years, based on tenure. Staff with over 15 years of service qualify for the highest payouts. *—PTI*

PHOTO: RBI

RBI ups IPO financing limit to Rs 25 lakh

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised lending limits for retail investors in a bid to deepen market participation and boost liquidity. The financing ceiling for Initial Public Offers (IPOs) has been increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh per individual, while the cap on loans against shares (LAS) has been lifted fivefold from Rs 20 lakh to Rs 1 crore. The revised limits will also apply to investments in Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs).

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the revisions were long overdue, noting that LAS limits had not been changed since 1998. He stressed that updating them was "only natural," particularly in view of inflation and the growing scale of market activity.

The changes come amid a busy primary market, with major IPOs from Reliance Jio and Tata Capital on the horizon. Analysts expect the higher lending limits to attract stronger High Net Worth Individual (HNI) participation, boosting subscription levels.

In addition, the RBI announced it would remove the ceiling on lending against listed debt securities, giving banks more flexibility to finance investors. Risk weights for Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) infrastructure and housing finance have also been eased for ongoing projects.

The central bank further said licensing for new urban cooperative banks will resume after more than two decades, and over 250 regulatory instructions will be consolidated into master directions to reduce compliance costs.

Officials said the measures will expand credit access, improve liquidity, and encourage broader engagement in India's equity markets. *—ANI*

WeWork secures ₹1,348 cr from anchor investors ahead of IPO

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

WeWork India has secured over Rs 1,348 crore from anchor investors ahead of its Initial Public Offering (IPO), which opens for subscription on 3 October.

The co-working operator allotted 2.08 crore shares at Rs 648 each to 67 funds, reflecting robust interest from both domestic and international institutions. Indian participation included ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund, HDFC MF, and Axis MF, alongside insurers such as SBI General Insurance and Kotak Mahindra Life. Global names like Goldman Sachs Fund and Allianz Global Investors also subscribed.

The IPO, valued at Rs 3,000 crore, will run until 7 October with a price band of Rs 615 to Rs 648 per share. Entirely an Offer for Sale (OFS), the proceeds will go to selling shareholders—Embassy Buildcon LLP, which holds a 76.2 per cent stake, and WeWork Global, which owns 23.5 per cent. The company itself will not receive funds.

Founded in 2017, WeWork India operates 7.7 million sq ft across major cities including Bengaluru **PHOTO: X**

Founded in 2017 under an exclusive licence of the WeWork brand, WeWork India operates 7.7 million sq ft across major cities including Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Hyderabad, with a desk capacity exceeding 1 lakh. *—PTI*

NUVAMA GETS SEBI NOD FOR MUTUAL FUND ENTRY

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has given approval to the financial services company Nuvama Wealth Management Ltd to establish its own mutual fund business.

In a stock exchange filing, the company confirmed that Sebi, through a letter dated 1 October, 2025, has authorised it to act as sponsor for the proposed Nuvama Mutual Fund.

This clearance will allow Nuvama to launch a range of schemes, including offerings under the Specialised Investment Fund category. However, Sebi will grant the final registration certificate only after the firm fulfils certain additional requirements. The move represents a significant expansion for Nuvama into the asset management space. *—PTI*

Centre plans ₹20,000 cr fund to boost infras

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Indian government is considering the creation of a Rs 20,000 crore risk guarantee fund to stimulate private sector investment in infrastructure. The proposed scheme is designed to share project risks, reduce the financial burden on developers, and encourage banks to extend larger loans to major projects.

According to sources, the fund may be managed by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) and would focus on underwriting development risks for new projects. It would cover losses arising from policy uncertainty and other non-commercial risks, factors that often deter private capital. To ensure accountability, developers may be required to maintain a minimum stake in projects, while risk-based premiums could be levied.

The move comes as India faces a substantial infrastructure gap, with inefficiencies estimated to cost four to five per cent of GDP. The country will need to invest around USD 4.5 trillion (390 lakh crore) in infrastructure by 2030 to sustain its economic growth trajectory and meet the target of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy, as per the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) report.

A bankable guarantee with timely payment assurance is expected to be critical for the scheme's success. Officials believe the initiative could raise India's global competitiveness and support the government's Make in India programme, which relies heavily on manufacturing capacity and modern infrastructure. *—PTI*

Auto giant SKF India to invest ₹1,460 cr by 2030

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

SKF India group, a leading auto components manufacturer, has announced plans to invest up to Rs 1,460 crore by 2030 across its newly demerged automotive and industrial businesses. The funds will be used for capacity expansion and a new manufacturing facility.

The company has completed the demerger of its industrial business, now named SKF India (Industrial) Ltd, which is expected to be listed by November pending regulatory approvals. SKF India Ltd will continue as the automotive-focused entity.

Shareholders will receive one share of the industrial unit for every share held in the automotive business, ensuring preserved ownership across both firms.

The industrial division will target growth in manufacturing, railways, renewables, and mining, with Rs 800 crore to Rs 950 crore earmarked for channel expansion and a new plant in Pune by 2028. Meanwhile, the automotive division will focus on India's mobility transformation, including electrification, hybridisation, and advanced safety technologies. It plans to invest Rs 410 crore to Rs 510 crore by 2030 across its Haridwar, Pune, and Bangalore facilities. *—PTI*

SBI predicts lower inflation

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

India's inflation in the current and next financial years is likely to fall well below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest projections, according to a report from the State Bank of India (SBI).

The RBI recently revised its Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation estimate for FY26 downwards to 2.6 per cent, a 160 basis-point cut from April levels. However, the SBI report suggests actual inflation in FY26 and FY27 may be even lower, supported by favourable domestic conditions such as a healthy monsoon, higher kharif crop sowing, sufficient foodgrain stocks, and comfortable reservoir levels.

Alongside this, the RBI raised its real GDP growth forecast for FY26 to 6.8 per cent and projected FY27 inflation at 4.5 per cent.

The report also endorsed the central bank's decision to keep its policy interest rate unchanged, calling it a logical response to global economic uncertainty. It noted, however, that the RBI appears to have left room for future rate cuts, though the timing remains uncertain.

According to SBI, India's improving inflation outlook strengthens its economic resilience, while supportive reforms and comfortable liquidity conditions could further reinforce growth momentum. *—ANI*

Copper industry flags threat from UAE imports

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Indian Primary Copper Producers Association (IPCPA) has expressed alarm over rising imports of copper rods from the UAE under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), stating that the trend jeopardises domestic investments in copper refining.

Since 1996, India's major copper producers, including Hindustan Copper Ltd, Hindalco Industries, Vedanta Ltd, and Kutch Copper Ltd (Adani Group), have developed a refined copper capacity of 1.25 million tonnes, with a projected FY25 demand of 0.85 million tonnes. However, the IPCPA claims CEPA presents "a significant obstacle" to further capacity expansion, as UAE firms, lacking copper mining and refining infrastructure, are exporting copper rods with minimal value addition.

The association noted that the copper rod imports from the UAE nearly doubled to 86.06 kilotonnes in FY25, following a reduction in import duties from 2 per cent to 1 per cent in May 2025, which is set to be eliminated by May 2026. The IPCPA warned of increasing imports and criticised the tariff rate quota (TRQ) of 85,000 tonnes as excessive, undermining domestic producers.

- The association noted that the copper rod imports from the UAE nearly doubled.

"The UAE is able to route minimally processed copper rods to India due to the current Product-Specific Rule," IPCPA stated. The association has called for the revisions to these rules and a cap on the TRQ at 20,000 tonnes per annum to safeguard India's copper industry. *—PTI*

TO BE TRILLIONAIRE SOON

Elon Musk is now first person worth $500B

BASTROP, 2 OCT

Elon Musk has become the first person in history to achieve a net worth of over $500 billion (£370.9 billion), according to Forbes. His fortune briefly reached $500.1 billion on Wednesday before settling at just over $499 billion.

Musk remains the world's richest person, well ahead of Oracle's Larry Ellison, who sits at $350.7 billion.

The tech billionaire's wealth is driven by a 12 per cent stake in Tesla, which has surged over 20 per cent this year. Tesla shares rose 3.3 per cent on Wednesday, as investors welcomed Musk's renewed focus on his businesses following his departure from the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

- The tech billionaire's wealth is driven by a 12 per cent stake in Tesla, which has surged over 20 per cent this year.

Musk's other ventures, including AI startup xAI and rocket firm SpaceX, have also seen rising valuations. xAI was last valued at $75 billion, with reports suggesting it could soon hit $200 billion. SpaceX, meanwhile, is reportedly eyeing a $400 billion valuation.

Tesla is undergoing a shift towards AI and robotics. Musk recently bought $1 billion worth of Tesla shares, signalling strong confidence. The board has also proposed a potential $1tn compensation package for Musk, dependent on achieving targets such as selling 12 million cars, one million AI robots, and increasing Tesla's value eightfold. Despite recent challenges from rivals like China's BYD, Tesla board chair Robyn Denholm confirmed Musk is now "front and centre" at the firm.

Musk calls for boycott of Netflix

Separately, Musk sparked controversy after urging followers on X to cancel Netflix subscriptions. He accused 'Dead End: Paranormal Park' creator Hamish Steele of mocking the killing of Right-wing activist Charlie Kirk. MAGA influencer Gunther Eagleman joined the call for a boycott on Thursday. *—Agencies*

'Electronics scheme gets Rs 1.15L cr investment deals'

NEW DELHI, 2 OCT

The Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme has garnered investment proposals totalling Rs 1.15 lakh crore, announced Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw. He stated, "The proposals have exceeded investment, employment and production targets multifold compared to the goals set during the scheme's formulation." The application window for the scheme closed on 30September, revealing proposals amounting to Rs 1,15,351 crore, significantly surpassing the initial target of Rs 59,000 crore. Electronics and IT Secretary S Krishnan added that these proposals are expected to create employment for 1.41 lakh individuals, compared to the target of 91,600. The application window for capital equipment segments remains open. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ashwin goes unsold in ILT20 auction

DUBAI, 2 OCT

Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin went unsold at the ILT20 auction. Ashwin, the only player with a six-figure base price of USD 120,000, did not feature in the accelerated auction either but could still cut a wildcard signing. Ashwin had registered for the UAE-based league after announcing his retirement from the Indian Premier League, a move that made him eligible to play in overseas franchise competitions. He had made himself available for the entire season The 39-year-old had last week signed with Big Bash League side Sydney Thunder, becoming the first high-profile Indian cricketer to feature in the competition.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@COCO

Gauff beats Lys to reach China Open SF

BEIJING, 2 OCT

Defending champion Coco Gauff reached the semifinals of the China Open for the third straight year after beating hard-hitting Eva Lys 6-3, 6-4 on Thursday. The second-seeded American was troubled on her serve and conceded seven break-point chances in Beijing. But Lys, a German player seeking her first career WTA title, could convert only three of them and dropped her own serve five times against the French Open champion. "She's a tough opponent, she hit some incredible shots on the run," said Gauff, who is seeking her 11th career title. "I was trying my best to stay aggressive. Just staying confident in my game and not being too passive."—*PTI*

Tough challenge: Sinner primed for Shanghai title

SHANGHAI, 2 OCT

World number two Jannik Sinner said on Thursday that he anticipates "a very, very difficult and tough challenge" as he prepares to defend his Shanghai Masters title, a day after winning the China Open. The 24-year-old Italian dominated teenager Learner Tien to clinch his 21st ATP title in Beijing on Wednesday, before travelling down to Shanghai hours later. With no Carlos Alcaraz, who has withdrawn because of "physical issues", Sinner's main rival in the ATP 1000 tournament looks to be four-time Shanghai champion Novak Djokovic. "I have only one practice session to get ready, but let's see," Sinner said. "It's going to be a very, very difficult challenge, especially the first (match)... You never know what's going to happen," he added.—*PTI*

Namibia qualifies for T20 WC2026 in India and SL

DUBAI, 2 OCT

Namibia became the 16th team to qualify for the T20 World Cup next year, to be held in India and Sri Lanka, after it beat Tanzania by 63 runs in the first semifinal of the Africa Regional qualifying event in Harare on Thursday. One of Zimbabwe and Kenya will become the second team to qualify from Africa for next year's showpiece when they lock horns in the second semifinal of the qualifying tournament in Harare later on Thursday. The final is scheduled for Saturday, although the outcome of that match will be inconsequential in the context of qualification. Before Namibia, 15 teams had already punched their tickets to India and Sri Lanka. —*PTI*

Test day 1: Rahul, Gill help India end with 121/2

Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah share seven wickets

AHMEDABAD, 2 OCT

Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah combined to decimate the West Indies for a paltry 162 before the in-form KL Rahul struck a measured half-century as India expectedly dominated the opening day of the first Test here on Thursday.

At stumps, the hosts reached 121/2 with another 41 runs in arrears. Siraj (4/40) and Bumrah (3/32) were the architects of India's dominating show on a day when rain caused a brief disruption to the proceedings.

Rahul, who struck the first fifty of the series, was batting on 53 off 114 balls with six fours, accompanied by India captain Shubman Gill on 18 (42 balls, 1x4s).

India lost Yashasvi Jaiswal (36) after his 68-run opening stand with Rahul, and B Sai Sudharsan (7) fell soon after. Still, the hosts largely remained unchallenged on the opening day of this two-Test affair.But he turned on the heat, smacking six more over the next 16 balls before he fell. Once he broke free, Jaiswal dealt only in boundaries on both sides of the wicket, and from a sedate start of 4 off 36 balls, he raced to 36 off 54 balls, hitting seven fours overall.But paying the price of playing one shot too many, Jaiswal cut one close to his body, which resulted in an outside edge going to Shai Hope behind the wickets off Jayden Seales.

If Jaiswal failed to convert his start, No.3 Sudharsan (7) could not even spend enough time to give himself a chance. Unscathed from a mix-up between the wickets with Rahul after he failed to respond to a second run while being inattentive to his partner in the 24th over, Sudharsan fell to West Indies skipper Roston Chase in the next.

India's Jasprit Bumrah bowls a delivery past West Indies Khary Pierre on day one of the first test cricket match between India and West Indies, at the Narendra Modi Stadium, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

Mohammed Siraj PHOTO: PTI

KL Rahul PHOTO: PTI

Sudharsan went for a pull shot against the off-spinner while misjudging the length of the ball, which pitched in line with the stumps and hit him on the back leg.

Brief Scores:
India 121 for 2 (Rahul 53*, Gill 18*) trail West Indies 162 (Greaves 32, Siraj 4-40, Bumrah 3-42, Kuldeep 2-25) by 41 runs. —*PTI*

WOMEN'S ODI WORLD CUP

South Africa continue search for elusive WC

GUWAHATI, 2 OCT

South Africa will be eager to turn consistent recent form into a title-winning run when they open their Women's ODI World Cup campaign against traditional powerhouses England here on Friday.

The Proteas have reached the semifinals in the last two editions of the ODI World Cup and finished runners-up in consecutive T20 World Cups.

They now enter this tournament brimming with confidence after victories over England, Australia, Sri Lanka, West Indies, and Pakistan.

South Africa's firepower comes from their explosive top order, spearheaded by Laura Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits, both of whom are in exceptional form.

Marizanne Kapp, the heartbeat of the team with her all-around skills, remains central to their balance.

Her presence alongside the experienced Sune Luus, Chloe Tryon, and youngsters Nadine de Klerk and Nondumiso Shangase gives the squad enviable depth and multiple match-winning options.

Yet, the Proteas will be wary of their over-reliance on the Wolvaardt-Brits partnership.

Spin also remains a concern, particularly with conditions in India and Colombo expected to assist slower bowlers. Nonkululeko Mlaba will lead the department, and much of the responsibility rests on her shoulders.

South Africa vs England
Match starts at
3.00 pm IST

The likes of Luus, Tryon, and Shangase have shown quality but struggled for consistency.

England, meanwhile, arrives as a team in transition and without the smoothest of buildups.

A 1-2 home defeat to India exposed several frailties in their setup. Their bowling looked flat, their batting overly reliant on Nat Sciver-Brunt, and their fielding was unconvincing

The side struggles to hold its nerves when the chips are down and will thus look to grab the early momentum in the tournament. —*PTI*

Volleyball: Hyderabad Hawks beat Calicut Heroes

HYDERABAD, 2 OCT

Hyderabad Black Hawks overcame a tough challenge from Calicut Heroes to win the opening match of the Prime Volleyball League Season Four 15-12, 18-16, 18-16, here on Thursday.

Calicut Heroes' Vikas Maan's impressive blocking shut down the opponents' attacks early on, with their coach Sunny Joseph's strategy to give Rajasthan's Ashok Bishnoi a starting spot working in their favour.

Sahil Kumar began the counter-attack to bring the hosts back into the game as Calicut's inconsistencies with first-touch affected their momentum. —*PTI*

Manav-Manush pair loses in China Smash 2025 QFs

BEIJING, 2 OCT

Indian paddlers Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah bowed out in the quarterfinal stage of the China Smash 2025 in Beijing on Thursday.

The Indian pair lost 6-11, 7-11, 11-9, 9-11 to China's Chen Junsong and Zhou Qihao in a match that lasted just over 28 minutes.

They had reached the final eight stage after defeating Martin Allegro and Adrien Rassenfosse.

The defeat also meant that India's campaign in the tournament had come to an end.

India's Velavan Senthilkumar and Veer Chotrani moved into the quarterfinals of the Charlottesville Open squash. —*PTI*

GCT FINALS 2025

Praggnanandhaa holds Aronian in first game of 3rd-place match

SAO PAULO, 2 OCT

Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa began his third-place playoff at the Grand Chess Tour Finals in Sao Paulo, Brazil, with a solid draw against American GM Levon Aronian on Thursday.

Aronian pushed in a straightforward endgame during the first of two classical games, but Praggnanandhaa defended comfortably. The American later admitted he was surprised by his opponent's opening choice., "I didn't think he would play the Sicilian Defence. He had some bad games in equal-endgame situations, so I thought it would be a good idea to test the theory.

He has improved in that field, " Aronian said., Praggnanandhaa, meanwhile, stressed he was focused less on the result than on competing hard. "I wanted a fight. I did try to play some Sicilian lines. I'll try to fight in every game I play, " he said. Elsewhere, the final between GMs Fabiano Caruana and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave also opened with a draw. —*PTI*

R. Pragg PHOTO: PTI

PSG sinks Barcelona, Manchester held by Monaco

BARCELONA, 2 OCT

Goncalo Ramos struck a 90th-minute winner as Paris Saint-Germain sealed a statement win over Barcelona in the Champions League.

Trailing 1-0 at the Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys and without injured star forwards Ousmane Dembele, Desire Doue, and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, defending champion PSG fought back for a 2-1 victory against one of the favorites to lift the trophy in May. "It doesn't matter which of our players are on the team.

When they are wearing our shirt, carrying our badge on their shirt, then the amount of attitude and effort is non-negotiable," PSG coach Luis Enrique said. Manchester City had to settle for a 2-2 draw with Monaco after Eric Dier scored a 90th-minute penalty for the hosts.

Villarreal and Juventus also ended 2-2 after Renato Veiga's late equalizer.

Haaland scores 2, but Man City held

Erling Haaland did what Erling Haaland does with two more goals in the Champions League, but it wasn't enough to seal victory in Monaco.

Having become the quickest player to reach 50 goals in the competition last month, the Norwegian looks certain to become the quickest to reach 60.

Lionel Messi managed it in 80 appearances. Haaland is on 52 after 50 games.

But that will be of little comfort to Pep Guardiola, who watched his team squander two points by conceding a late penalty that Dier converted to seal the draw.

"It isn't good enough," Haaland said. "We have to try to win the next game. It is the only thing we can do." Hotshot Hojlund

Goncalo Ramos PHOTO: X/@PSG

B'DESH CRUSH PAK BY SEVEN WICKETS IN WOMEN'S WC

COLOMBO, 2 OCT

An unbeaten half-century from Rubya Haider and her match-winning partnership with skipper Nigar Sultana, backed by fine bowling from young pacer Marufa Akter, helped Bangladesh thrash an out-of-depth Pakistan by seven wickets in their ICC Women's World Cup match here on Thursday.

Rubya struck a 77-ball unbeaten 54 (4x8) and shared a 62-run partnership with skipper Sultana (23 off 44 balls) for the third wicket as Bangladesh overhauled the target of 130 with 113 balls to spare, reaching 131 for 3 in 31.1 overs. Rubya played with caution initially after Bangladesh lost opener Fargana Hoque and Sharmin Akhter early, but once she got the feel of the pitch, the 28-year-old hit a flurry of boundaries to make the chase look easy.She belted three boundaries in the 19th over, bowled by veteran Pakistan left-arm spinner Nashra Sandhu, which changed the complexion of the game as Bangladesh went into overdrive.

Bangladesh were off to a slow start as they were 23 for one after the 10th over. However, it was disciplined bowling by the Bangladesh bowlers from the likes of young pacer Marufa Akter (2/31), veteran spinner Nahida Akter (2/19), and Shorna Akter (3/5), which set up the match for their team as Pakistan were bowled out for 129 in 38.3 overs. —*PTI*

India U-19 outplay Australia U-19 in first Youth Test

BRISBANE, 2 OCT

India U19 stamped their superiority over Australia U19 with an innings and 58 runs win in the first Youth Test here on Thursday.

Having a mountain to climb, Australia U19 resumed their second innings at eight for one but were bowled out for 127 in 49.3 overs.

India needed to bat just once in the game, thanks to hundreds from Vaibhav Suryavanshi and Vedant Trivedi.

Medium pacer Deepesh Devendran, who took five wickets in the first innings, added three more to his match tally. Kishan Kumar, Khilan Patel, and Anmoljeet Singh shared the rest of the wickets to fall as Australian batting crumbled against the visitors.

The second and final Youth Test begins in Mackay on 7 October.

India had blanked the hosts 3-0 in the preceding Youth ODI series. —*PTI*

India U-19 team players pose with the trophy PHOTO: PTI

'AN HONOUR TO RETURN'

India is a passionate football nation: Messi

KOLKATA, 2 OCT

Lionel Messi on Thursday confirmed his participation in the much-anticipated GOAT Tour of India 2025, calling it an "honour" to revisit the "passionate football nation" where he last played 14 years ago.

"It is such an honour for me to make this trip. India is a very special country, and I have good memories from my time there 14 years ago. The fans were fantastic.

"India is a passionate football nation, and I look forward to meeting a new generation of fans while sharing the love I have for this beautiful game," Messi said in an official statement.

The organisers had already unveiled the itinerary on August 15, and Messi's statement on Thursday marked the first time the football icon himself confirmed the visit. Messi will begin his whirlwind four-city tour in Kolkata on December 13 before travelling to Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and New Delhi. The trip will end with a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 December. During the tour, the Argentine superstar will headline concerts, meet-and-greet sessions, food festivals, football masterclasses, and even a padel exhibition at Mumbai's Brabourne Stadium.

In Kolkata, Messi's event will be held at Salt Lake Stadium, which was also confirmed on Thursday.

The stadium will host the legend for the second time this time in the "GOAT Concert' and "GOAT Cup' on 13 December, where Messi is expected to share the field with Indian icons Sourav Ganguly, Bhaichung Bhutia, and Leander Paes.

Organisers are also planning a 25-foot-high mural to be unveiled during Durga Puja festivities, along with the inauguration of Messi's biggest-ever statue.—*PTI*

Lionel Messi PHOTO: PTI

FIA declares first Formula One 'heat hazard' race

SINGAPORE, 2 OCT

This week's Singapore Grand Prix has officially been declared a "heat hazard," meaning cars must carry cooling equipment. It's the first time the rule has been used in Formula 1.

Race director Rui Marques declared a heat hazard on Thursday because the temperature is forecast to be above 31 degrees (88 F) during the race weekend. The temperature in the F1 website forecast for Saturday is 32 °C, rising to 33 °C on Sunday.

Under new rules for 2025, the governing body, the FIA, introduced cooling vests for drivers that pump fluid around a network of tubes in the vest.

Drivers don't have to use the system, but can't save weight by leaving it out.

Even drivers who don't wear the vest must have some cooling system equipment fitted in the car, along with ballast to compensate for the weight of the vest.

The FIA started work on cooling technology for drivers after the Qatar Grand Prix in 2023 saw drivers require medical attention after feeling unwell in the heat. —*PTI*